

## Safer Communities Board Away Day - Decisions and Actions Required

### Decisions

1. *Members are asked to consider the attached note and agree (or offer guidance to officers):*
  - a. *the scope/objectives for a Safer Communities Board Away Day (paragraph 3);*
  - b. *the working assumptions on duration, timing, attendance and location (paragraph 4).*

### Actions Required

2. *Officers to action as directed by the Board. A detailed programme for the Away Day will be circulated to Board office holders for consideration in December.*

**Action by:** *LGA/LG Analysis and Research as required*

*Contact Officer: David Williams, 020 7664 3266, david.williams@lga.gov.uk*

## Safer Communities Board Away Day

### Summary

1. *This report sets out proposals for a Board Away Day in February 2007. Direction is sought on the objectives and scope of such an event, to support detailed agenda planning by officers (to be put to office holders for agreement).*

### Background

2. *At its September 2006 meeting, the Board asked officers to work up proposals for an Away Day. Local Government Analysis and Research (LGAR) has been developing a model for such events and has successfully trialled its approach with the Children and Young People's Board and with the Community Well-being Board. This experience provides a useful framework for consideration of a Safer Communities Away Day.*

3. *The principal purpose of the Board discussion on 13 November is to elicit a clear set of agreed objectives for such an event. An Away Day on the theme of "Shaping the future of Safer Communities" might encompass discussion under the following broad themes:*

- *a facilitated 'futures analysis' of the Safer Community challenges over the next 5-10 years. We do not need to decide a specific approach now, but this element is likely to work best if rooted in practical examples or localities rather than being conducted in the abstract. One option might be to focus discussion around, say, three illustrative but contrasting councils drawn from the Board's membership.*
- *against a potentially very wide-ranging set of issues, discussion of **the opportunities for, and role of, the Board in shaping the response to those challenges.** This could examine the ways in which a membership organisation like the LGA can add value; how far we should be trying to set the agenda for the local government sector and/or for national government in these areas; and whether we do better to try to cover everything to some extent or to concentrate on specific aspects of the Safer Communities agenda. We might also want to extend the discussion to cover management of key relationships – who are we seeking to influence and how best do we engage with them? Are there external stakeholders who can help us to get our message across?*
- *pulled through from this, a more **internally-focused discussion of what this means for the conduct of Board business.** This might include a discussion of Board roles and responsibilities, effective ways of working and the business planning cycle. It will be important to agree some specific actions against which progress can be reviewed at a later date.*

4. *It would also be useful at this stage to get Board views on, and agreement to, a number of working assumptions for the event as an aid for more detailed planning, as follows:*

- *the **Away Day** should be a 24 hour event (perhaps up to a day and a half) running from lunchtime on Day 1 to lunch/afternoon on Day 2, with an overnight stay and some (gentle) after-dinner work. It would be possible to run an event over a single day, but it is a full agenda and we risk running out of steam. Experience from other Away Days suggests that, although more expensive, a 24 hour event can offer a better return on our investment (both financially and in terms of Board members' time).*
- ***this would be an event for the full Board**, supported by relevant officers (the Programme Director, Business Manager and key intervention policy staff). We would also identify a small number of external participants to provide challenge and grit to the discussions in a "critical friend" role. The event will require facilitation.*
- *if the Away Day is to be successful and add value to the future conduct of Board business, it needs careful planning. We also need to secure time in Members' busy diaries. This suggests that, realistically, we should **plan on an Away Day for February 2007**, falling between the Board meetings scheduled for January and March. (An alternative would be to use one of these slots for the Away Day itself, although the linked scheduling of Fire Services Management Committee meetings on these days provides an administrative complication that would need to be resolved.)*
- *the Away Day would be **held out of London**.*

### Next Steps

5. *Subject to Board Members' views, officers will work up a detailed programme for the Away Day, covering discussion topics (together with any necessary preparatory activities) and attendees, for consideration and agreement by Board office holders in December. Decisions on venue, level of facilitation and external participation will need to reflect available resources (see below): this will be confirmed in parallel in December.*

## **Implications for Wales**

6. *There are no implications for Wales arising from this report.*

## **Financial/Resource Implications**

7. *There is currently no budgetary provision for a Board Away Day; we need to look in the first instance to the policy directorate and other purchasing budgets for funding. A 24 hour event (including an overnight stay and external facilitation) could cost between £10-15k. A single day event with in-house facilitation could perhaps be delivered for under £5k. Although this represents a significant proportion of the remaining uncommitted policy directorate budget, the difference between the two is unlikely to be financially material if it helps to ensure a successful and constructive event.*

Contact Officer: David Williams, 020 7664 3266, david.williams@ga.gov.uk